



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

NEWS RELEASE

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Senators Call for Greater Action on Escalating Deficit *Baucus, McCain, Feingold, Lindsey Graham and Bayh Contact President to Urge Balanced Budget Efforts*

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) U.S. Senators Max Baucus (D-Mont.), John McCain (R-Ariz.), Russ Feingold (D-Wisc.), Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), and Evan Bayh (D-Ind.) today commended President Bush for his recent comments expressing support for reducing the budget deficit, but they called for further action to balance the budget.

"Our budget deficit is at unprecedented levels, which could defeat many of our efforts to strengthen the economy," Baucus said. "These budget deficits will raise the costs of mortgages, student loans, and business investments. We need to balance the budget, or Americans will have a poorer standard of living."

The Senators today called for steps to be taken to strengthen the federal budget process as a key to reducing the deficit. The first step needed, they stated, is the reinstatement of the pay-as-you-go requirements for both spending and revenue. This requirement would ensure that all legislation passed must be fully offset and not contribute to the federal deficit.

"We're in a much different place than we were just a few years ago and we must take action now to stop our slide further and further into the red," Baucus added. "As elected officials, it's the responsibility of every single one of us to ensure we don't leave this deficit as a legacy to our children and grandchildren. I encourage the president to work together with Congress to get our budget under control."

Full text of letter follows:

February 12, 2004
The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to support greater action to reduce the budget deficit.

We commend your State of the Union statement that "we should limit the burden of government on this economy by acting as good stewards of taxpayer dollars." We welcome your recent budget's increased attention to reducing the deficit.

The Government should go further. The Government should commit to a sustainable path to balance the budget.

We compliment the position stated by your Administration before your recent budget (for example, in the Analytical Perspectives section of your fiscal year 2004 budget and in the January 22, 2004, Statement of Administration Policy to the Senate on H.R. 3108, the Pension Funding Equity Act) that "[t]he Administration supports the extension of [the Budget Enforcement Act's pay-as-you-go requirements] in a manner that ensures fiscal discipline" The Government needs to restore and strengthen the Federal budget process by, among other things, enacting statutory pay-as-you-go requirements for both spending and revenues.

We look forward to working together -- across party lines, Congress and Executive -- to reduce the deficit. Thank you for your increased attention to this important matter.

Most Respectfully,

Max Baucus
John McCain
Russ Feingold
Lindsey Graham
Evan Bayh

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